Biscuits for Mid-day Meal in schools

1721. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether biscuit manufacturers have lobbied for 100 gm. biscuit packs, to replace hot cooked Mid-day Meals in schools; and

(b) whether lobbying for biscuits was in line with the overall pattern of private sector trying to usurp Government's role in the name of transparency, at the peril of crores of children's health?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (b) The Government received a proposal from biscuit manufacturers for serving biscuits in place of hot cooked Mid-day Meal. After careful consideration, the Government has not supported the proposal because replacement of the Mid-day Meal Programme through supply of biscuits would not be in the nutritional interest of children since it does not fulfil the nutritional norms, dietary requirement and satiety of children.

New colleges for B.Ed. and M.Ed courses

1722. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is giving permission to start new colleges for B.Ed. and M.Ed. courses; and

(b) whether any guidelines and procedure are stipulated for giving such permission and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) The NCTE grants recognition to institutions for running various teacher education courses including B.Ed. and M.Ed. courses, in accordance with the provision contained in Sections 14 and 15 of the NCTE Act, 1993 and the Rules and Regulations made thereunder.

(b) The NCTE (Recognition Norms & Procedure) Regulations, 2007 notified on 10th December, 2007 provides for the various norms, procedure and guidelines for grant of recognition to institutions undertaking the various teacher training courses.

Reforming higher education

1723. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether UGC has initiated a slew of measures to reform the higher education during the Eleventh Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether UGC has prepared an action plan and is working out on modalities for drafting Acts, Statutes and Ordinances of the proposed universities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (d) The University Grants Commission (UGC) has proposed a number of steps for reforms in higher education. This includes mitigation of quality gaps in universities and colleges, revamping of Academic Staff Colleges, strengthening of Inter-University Centres, establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Cells in universities and colleges, academic reforms in universities and colleges, designing of model curriculum, identification of various modes of public-private participation to promote higher education, etc.

Education to children under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

1724. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether nearly 3.68 crore children have become part of the country's education system ever since Government launched the ambitious Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, targeting children in the age group of 6-14 years;

(b) if so, whether the SSA was launched with the aim of universalising elementary education, and the programme is aiming at universalisation by 2010;

(c) whether the number of out of school children, in the 6-14 age group, has been steadly declining since the launch of SSA; and

(d) the steps being taken to provide education to all children in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (d) The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme is being implemented in all districts of the country to achieve the goal of universalisation of elementary education in a mission mode. Various incentives including cooked mid day meal are being provided to ensure universal enrolment of children in rural areas, in the 6-14 years age group. 98% of rural India has a primary school within one kilometre and remaining rural habitations have alternate schooling arrangements including Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS). **Consequently since the launch of SSA all the out of school children in the 6-14 age group in the country** (how numbered 320 lakh in 2001-02), **have been brought in the ambit of elementary education except** 75.97 **lakh out-of-school children** (as on 31.03.2007), **who represent the difficult to reach category.**

Sports, games and skill development in schools

1725. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A.HEPTULLA:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that by giving due priority to sports, games and skill development, quality of education could have been improved at primary and secondary level;